

Grace
Are You Paralyzed By Grace?
Matthew 11:28-30

We are in our second week of a four-week series on God's grace. Last week, we discovered that God's grace means so much more than forgiveness, grace can teach us a new way to live.

The grace of God is capable of reaching across every culture, every gender, and every generation. It's funny, I've heard people say over the years, "**God loves me just the way I am.**" We are comfortable with that statement, but we are less comfortable with, "**God loves me so much he won't let me stay just the way I am.**"

Most of us are OK with receiving forgiveness, but perhaps skip school when it comes time to learn how to deny ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live sensible and upright lives.

We have to come to the realization that Grace is something more than a means for gaining forgiveness. There is a disconnect between the good news of Jesus' sacrifice and our calling to become the light of the world. Hearing the same message week after week, along with the same remedy, they remain in the same place. These people have been paralyzed by it. Never moving on beyond the forgiveness stage into a new life, they repeat the process of sinning and asking for forgiveness over and over again.

They say things like, "I'm just a sinner saved by grace," or, "there's nothing good inside of me. I'll always be a sinner, because that's what I always do." Some people have sang the same song for 40 years. Can I admit to you this morning, we have over-talked about what sin takes away and under-talked about what the Spirit has put in us.

Listen to me this morning, Jesus didn't die to change our habits, he died to make us new! I'm grateful that he paid the price for my sin, eternally grateful. But we should also be grateful for his resurrection power which is capable of changing us

from the inside out! This means we are not forever trapped within the cancer of sin. Grace not only wipes away sin, Grace teaches us how to avoid sin.

There's a cure, not just a treatment. Our challenge is how we see Jesus, and for many of us, he is only a treatment. When we limit the work of Jesus to nothing but forgiveness, we lose sight of the possibilities of experiencing a new kind of life with him here and now. That would be a shame because the cure really does work, not only in the next life, but also in the here and now!

What was true for the apostle Paul is also true for us today. When we are born into God's family, we are also born into the family business. God's grace doesn't just wipe away our sins, God's grace asked us to join in the work of the kingdom of God.

Dallas Willard had a saying that we should all take to heart, **"Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning."** Let me explain: Paul described his task as one of great endurance, in troubles, hardships and distress, in beatings, imprisonment and riots, and hard work, sleepless nights and hunger. Paul had no trouble seeing the connection between grace and effort.

Richard Foster once said, "Grace saves us from life without God, even more it empowers us for life with God."

Grace opens up the startling possibility that we do not have to yo-yo between sin and forgiveness. Instead, Grace shows us the destiny we have in Christ.

So what is the deeper side of grace? The deeper side of grace is the discovery that our New Birth should be followed by growth into the image of Jesus. **The deeper side of grace is that when we begin to join in the family business, he will also begin to take on the family likeness.**

Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Jesus said, "take my yoke upon you and learn from me." A yoke is a large collar; which places the strength of an ox or horse at the disposal of someone else. We place our strength at his disposal. He will not conquer us. We must bow before him as a matter of choice. The path to becoming like Jesus starts with this invitation, ***"Come to me."***

Grace is about more than knowing, it's also about being and growing. Let's get busy growing because God has a new way of living that he wants to teach us today.

Let's celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ by living a new resurrected life right here and right now Through the grace that only comes from the Son of God!